

TO DISCONTINUE THE ENLISTMENT OF
NEGROES FOR MILITARY SERVICE.

2670

SPEECH

OF

Hon. JAMES L. SLAYDEN,
OF TEXAS,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Tuesday, January 8, 1907.



WASHINGTON.

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SPEECH
OF
HON. JAMES L. SLAYDEN.

The House being in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and having under consideration the bill (H. R. 23551) making appropriations for the Army for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1908—

Mr. SLAYDEN said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Although I have had the privilege of serving in this House for ten years, I have not quite grown accustomed to the habit of speaking to one bill while another was being considered. But I have just had an illustrious example of how it may be done, and it has put me somewhat at my ease in that respect. For nearly half an hour we have had an active discussion of a bill for an increase of the Artillery Corps, a bill that is not before the House, and which, so far as I am informed, has not even been considered yet by the committee to which it was referred. With this example to guide me, I shall now, Mr. Chairman, beg the indulgence of the House while I talk upon a matter that I wish to state frankly is not here in the form of a bill.

Mr. Chairman, at the beginning of the present session I submitted a bill to amend the military laws so that after July 1, 1907, there would be no negro regiments in the Army of the United States.

For a long time I have looked upon it as a desirable military reform. Recent events of a startling and deplorable nature have convinced me that it is urgent. It can not be delayed, I apprehend, without risking a collision between white citizens and negro troops. There is reason to fear that occasional assassination and riot may be succeeded by disasters that will measure up to the standard of battle. Firmly believing that, as I did, I regarded it as a duty to try to prevent such a condition by amending the law. A series of violent outbreaks on the part of negro soldiers, culminating in a murderous assault on the unfencing citizens of Brownsville, decided me to offer the bill without further delay. The bill was not offered for buncombe. I proposed it because I am absolutely convinced that it is a measure of reform which must ultimately commend itself to the judgment of the American Congress. I very much regret to say, however, that there does not appear to be any immediate prospect of success. Like many good legislative suggestions, it will probably have to die the death many times before the mind and conscience of a majority can be awakened. The lack of active sympathy for my measure among such of my Republican colleagues as I have spoken to about it makes me realize that I am not apt to have an opportunity to discuss the bill as pending

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before the House, and so, Mr. Chairman, I shall avail myself of this occasion to speak of it.

In the history of the negro troops of the United States one finds many chapters that tell of violent breaches of discipline, of riotous and mutinous conduct, of murder and race hostility. All these are to be found in the cold, formal, official reports filed in the Department of War. These reports are not written with any consideration of the great politico-social question on which they have an important bearing, but it takes no very alert student to find the race question running all through them. As a rule, official reports are lacking in vitality, but these, when they touch even remotely the great, hopeless, and insoluble question—and if any question about the affairs of men is hopeless and insoluble this is—that confronts a large section of the country, throb and vibrate with human interest.

In declaring their unfitness to be American soldiers I have in view only the circumstances of their service. I do not impeach their physical courage. That is a virtue that belongs to nearly all men, and if there is any difference between savage and civilized man in this respect it possibly lies with the savage, who is undeterred from rash ventures by thought of the consequences.

But courage is only one of the qualities required in a good soldier. There should be between him and the people whose uniform he wears perfect sympathy and a common aspiration. This sympathy, this aspiration, does not exist between the blacks and whites, and in the very nature of things can never exist. It is prevented by basic and unalterable differences.

This may be denied by some gentlemen who have only theoretical knowledge of the negro or who have at odd moments studied in a casual and superficial manner the occasional specimens that have been brought to their attention; but it is true as gospel, as all men know who have studied the question at close range. Sympathy of the sort that welds people into a homogeneous political and social mass never has existed and never will exist between negroes and Caucasians. It is not only contrary to nature, but so contradictory of human experience that it is folly to expect and crime to build upon it. The incompatibility of races of a pronounced physical dissimilarity has been recognized and pointed out by many writers and travelers. Froude, in his fascinating book, *The English in the West Indies*, speaks of it. That distinguished gentleman, whose clear mind and high character all Americans admire and who will soon become the British Ambassador to this Government, Mr. James Bryce, speaks of the negroes in this country as "really a different nation dwelling beside or among, but not intermingled with, the white nation." As a philosopher and a statesman, and from a plane far above partisanship, he discusses the relations between the colored and the white races, or, as he terms them, the "advanced and the backward races of mankind."

Speaking at the University at Oxford, in 1902, about the natural hostility between the races of men who are physically dissimilar, he said:

Nothing really arrests intermarriage except physical repulsion, and physical repulsion exists only where there is a marked difference in physical aspect, and especially in color.

In the same lecture Mr. Bryce directed the attention of his audience to the fact that the feeling of repulsion existed between all dissimilar races and was more or less intense as the difference in color was more or less pronounced. There undoubtedly exists a marked race antipathy between the white and the Asiatic races, though less intense than that between the Caucasian and the negroid types.

Charles Francis Adams, of Massachusetts, than whom, I take it, the negroes never had a better friend, who has made a careful study of the race question, who has even gone to Africa for first-hand information, says "the race prejudice seems insurmountable."

It is not my duty, nor is this the time or place, to explain, justify, or condemn the feeling. I merely assert as a fact that mutual race antipathy does exist, that its existence has been recognized by students of the question who have considered it on a plane far above partisan politics, and that it is folly to ignore it in our legislation. If we persist in the folly, we will surely end in disaster.

This deep-seated and ineradicable race hostility, which grows daily more acute, is not peculiar to the United States. Although dormant when apart, it is unfailingly developed everywhere by contact and competition. It has written tragic chapters into the history of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The Moors were as unwelcome to the people of the Spanish Peninsula as the Chinese and Japanese are to our fellow-citizens on the Pacific coast, and it will not do to dismiss the Pacific coast race question by saying that the objection to Asiatic immigration in California is only from the hoodlum element. It runs through all classes of society.

It was my privilege to visit the city of San Francisco in company with a distinguished citizen of that city, then and now a Member of this House. With him I visited the Chinese quarter in that great and unfortunate city. Under his intelligent direction I was shown how the Chinese question impinged upon every phase of the life of the citizens of the city of San Francisco. He indicated to me in an unmistakable way the physical dangers from contact, the danger from disease, the opportunities for and tendency to crime, the increase of all sorts of social and sanitary conditions which are to be avoided if possible, all due to the Asiatic congestion. Furthermore, he showed me by examples the disastrous competition of the Asiatics with the citizens of San Francisco and California, his constituents. He convinced me that if this Congress did its duty to the people of the American Union who reside upon the Pacific coast it would forever make it impossible that those competitors in great numbers should be permitted to come in from Asiatic countries. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I think I risk nothing in saying that what I assert about this race question will be confirmed by every citizen of California.

The race prejudice which exists on the Pacific coast is only another form of the race question which is presented to us in the South and is not confined to the hoodlum element of the city of San Francisco, as many theoretical students of the question residing in the eastern part of the United States have held. It sometimes happens that the man who is slowest to think is quickest to act, and I have no doubt, Mr. Chairman, that the

violence which occasionally occurs in handling that question in the city of San Francisco has been as much in the thoughts of the higher as in the lower classes of society.

Mr. KAHN. Will the gentleman yield for a moment?

Mr. SLAYDEN. -With pleasure.

Mr. KAHN. In that very connection I desire to call the gentleman's attention to the report that was spoken of in the newspapers, which was presented in the British Parliament some months ago, with reference to the condition of the coolies in the South African gold fields. The people of California have always maintained that the oriental has vices which contaminate the white race, and the report which was presented in the British Parliament showed that the coolies in South Africa were so vicious in morals and indulged in vices so abhorrent to our civilization that the report was proclaimed to be absolutely unprintable. That shows conclusively that the people of California, who are thrown in direct contact with these Asiatics, are not in error in their estimate of the morality of the oriental. [Applause.]

Mr. SLAYDEN. Mr. Chairman, I will say to my friend from California [Mr. KAHN] that my information is as he has stated, that that report was not printed because it would not do to print; but I will also say to him that while I sympathize with him, and while I mean as a Member of Congress, so long as I may have the honor of being a Member of this body, to help him solve that question properly. I am not altogether sorry that he has an acute phase of it presented for his consideration and that of his fellow-citizens out there on the Pacific. [Applause on the Democratic side.]

Being greatly distressed at home by what Mr. Adams, of Massachusetts, calls "the insoluble question," my sympathy goes out to the white people of California who have a similar but lesser trouble.

Admitting the existence of hostility between dissimilar races who, because of circumstances that this generation can not influence, occupy the same territory and live under the same political institutions, is it not unwise to arm the backward and less responsible people and station them in the neighborhood of the others? I think so, and upon that belief my bill was predicated.

Let us now see what facts bearing on this question the records of the Department of War will disclose.

FORT MEADE INCIDENT.

The Twenty-fifth Infantry, three companies of which were recently dismissed the service by Executive order, has a particularly vicious record. There seems to be in the minds of some Members of this House a good deal of confusion on that point. No companies, as companies, were discharged. Men were discharged out of three companies, and it so happens that most of the men out of three companies were discharged. The units established by law, the company and the regiment, were not disturbed.

To resume:

While stationed at Fort Meade, Dak., in the summer, 1885, Corporal Hallon of that regiment murdered a citizen. The people of the community lynched the murderer. It is worth

noting that even as far north as Dakota an outraged public does not always, as it certainly should, await the slow formalities of the law to punish the crime of assassination. About three weeks after the lynching of the murderer fifteen or twenty negro soldiers raided and "shot up" the town of Sturgis, which is only a mile and a half from the post, at about 1 o'clock in the morning. They fired into dwellings and business houses and killed one man. According to the testimony taken by the coroner, the raiding, shooting, and killing was done in a thorough military manner. The murderers marched as an organized body and responded with fatal accuracy to the commands "ready, load, fire, etc."

There are two points in the official account of the Sturgis raid which are particularly well worth consideration. A gentleman who was present immediately wrote an interesting account of it to the President. I will quote one paragraph of his letter:

I happened to be at the fort last Saturday night when this last wholesale shooting took place. I was standing in front of General Sturgis's quarters talking with him. We were about going into the house when Lieutenant Sickles approached with a sergeant, and told the general that he had seen some fifteen or twenty colored soldiers going toward Sturgis with their guns. General Sturgis immediately ordered Lieutenant Sickles to take a detachment of his men and go at once and bring them back. A few minutes afterwards another lieutenant came to the house and said he heard firing from the direction of Sturgis, but he thought it was at the "Half-Way House."

Perhaps I should have stated, Mr. Chairman, that Fort Meade, where the troops were stationed, is a mile and a half from Sturgis.

The general then ordered him to take another detachment and arrest the soldiers.

It is well worth while keeping in mind the fact that all this was prior to the commitment of any crime beyond the slight breach of discipline in going out of barracks without orders. It was in anticipation of what really happened that the general acted. The letter, written on the spot at once, goes on to say:

In about a half hour afterwards a horseman came riding up in great haste and informed the general that the soldiers had fired into Abe Hill's house and killed an inoffensive cowboy who was standing there, and that they had also fired volleys into one or two other houses. General Sturgis then ordered that Captain Ord should make a check roll call, examine the arms, and bring in such as had the appearance of being recently fired. This was done. But the fellows had scampered back by short cuts over the hills and had gotten into their bunks before the roll call, which disclosed the absence of only three, who, I think, were satisfactorily accounted for.

Again I ask that it be observed, Mr. Chairman, that the general commanding and other officers were advised of this raid before any harm was done; that immediate and active steps were taken to prevent mischief; yet, and notwithstanding, fifteen or twenty soldiers did travel $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the town of Sturgis, raid it in military form, fire their guns in a military way, kill a citizen, and travel the same distance back to the post and escape identification. And yet there are eminent gentlemen who say that it was impossible for men out of the three companies at Brownsville to go two squares and back without detection when the officers were not forewarned. The other point that particularly merits attention is the fact that no negro who had knowledge of the identity of the raiders and murderers would tell what he knew. Moreover, I may say to gentlemen

on the other side of the aisle, the conspiracy of silence is a habit in the Twenty-fifth Infantry and a well-known characteristic of the race.

AT WINNEMUCCA.

Winnemucca, Nev., is the next scene of a criminal outbreak by this regiment. In June, 1899, while on the way to the Philippines, a train load of the men of the Twenty-fifth was halted at Winnemucca for supper. As soon as the station was reached the officers went to the hotel for supper, and the men, who were under no restraint whatever, according to the judge-advocate, Major Groesbeck, scattered through the town. They invaded a saloon in large numbers and soon became boisterous and took possession of the bar. They seized and took away the liquors and shot and wounded the barkeeper. All efforts to identify the perpetrators of the outrage were futile. No negro would tell, and so the guilty, aided again by the conspiracy of silence, escaped detection and punishment.

THE SAN CARLOS AFFAIR.

In October, 1899, at the San Carlos Indian Agency, Ariz., twelve or fifteen men of the company of the Twenty-fifth Infantry then stationed there made a murderous attack upon four peaceful Indians, beating them to insensibility with clubs. In this instance four of the would-be murderers turned states evidence, and I presume the others were punished. General Merriam, who commanded the department at the time, advised the removal of the negro soldiers and expressed the opinion that "white men would likely make less trouble."

I regret, Mr. Chairman, that General Merriam failed to say why white men would be apt to make less trouble, but that he did say so and that he must have had an excellent military reason for it is beyond all doubt. I commend his suggestion to the Members of this House and ask them to consider why the recommendation made by the commanding officer at the time that the guard was sent to replace those who had been mutinous, boisterous, and murderous should be for white men.

AT EL PASO.

Apparently when the War Department has been in doubt as to where negro troops are to be stationed they are sent to Texas, and so, after the murderous assault on the Indians made it necessary to remove them from the San Carlos Agency, Company C, of the Twenty-fifth Infantry, was sent to El Paso. I dare say there was no other place they could be sent without meeting with a protest, for no place, North or South, seems to want them. As bearing on this point, I ask attention to a letter written to Senator CULBERSON on the 4th day of June, two months and nine days before the trouble at Brownsville, in which Secretary Taft said:

The fact is that a certain amount of race prejudice between white and black seems to have become almost universal throughout the country, and no matter where colored troops are sent there are always some who make objections to their coming.

Mr. Chairman, I would that I had the privilege of taking this House into my confidence and telling them some stories about the stationing of these colored troops which I have received from such sources and from gentlemen whose identity I can not reveal. Suffice it to say, however, that the most

vehement protest against the stationing of these colored troops in the vicinity of the communities represented by the spokesmen in protest have been received from the North, and very far North at that—a large part of it.

However, they were sent to El Paso in 1899 and took station at Fort Bliss. They arrived at El Paso about the middle of November, 1899, and in just three months their deviltry began. A number of men out of Company A "took rifles from the arms racks and went to the city jail of El Paso, where two soldiers were held for trial by the city authorities on charge of drunk and disorderly, fired into the city jail, killing one policeman on duty there." I quote this from the language of Captain Loughborough, who reported the affair to the Adjutant-General of the Department of Texas. The well-attested facts in this case are these: On the night of February 16 Corporal Dyson, of Company A, Twenty-fifth Infantry, was arrested for being drunk and disorderly and confined in the city lockup. Sergt. John Kipper and two privates went to the jail and endeavored to secure Dyson's release by offering to give a bond for his appearance, but was informed that the only officer who had authority to release Dyson had gone home and would not return until morning.

Kipper and the others then went away, but returned to the jail at 5 o'clock in the morning with guns and axes and undertook to release their comrade by force. In the resulting mêlée Policeman Newton Stewart was killed, as was one of the soldiers. Eight Army rifles, it developed, had been taken from the gun racks, and six of them were ultimately recovered. The guilty men were arrested, with the exception of one who deserted and ran away from the country. One noncommissioned officer, Corporal Powell, confessed. It is a pleasure to say that to Captain Loughborough, a zealous and capable officer, is very largely due the credit of securing the evidence which convicted the murderers. Sergeant Kipper, one of the noncommissioned officers in whom some people place so much confidence, was tried and convicted, and, on appeal, the conviction was affirmed. The report of Gen. Cyrus A. Roberts, then lieutenant-colonel of the Thirteenth Infantry, and acting adjutant-general, Department of Texas, who examined into the circumstances, is an interesting review of the situation and of the incidents leading up to the crime. While he does not say in the same direct, blunt way that Major Blocksom did when he reported on the Brownsville affair that "the causes of the disturbance are racial," it means the same thing.

To some extent I am trying to follow these reports on the misdeeds of the Twenty-fifth Infantry in chronological order, and the next on the list is the occurrence at Fort Niobrara, Nebr. I shall not weary the House with a repetition of the details.

Mr. STEPHENS of Texas. If my colleague will permit me, I desire to state that at the time of the incident at El Paso it was a part of the district I then represented, and I am well acquainted with the circumstances that occurred there. This man who was killed was an ex-soldier of the Spanish war. His name was Stewart. He was the only support of his father and mother, who were very old and poor and were dependent upon him. He was at the time of the incident a jail guard. When these parties were arrested and put in jail, this young man was

on guard and was killed. I tried to get them a house built, and endeavored to secure a pension for these old people, but failed, as the bill was turned down by the committee, and I am unable to state their condition at the present time; but it certainly was horrible.

Mr. SLAYDEN. I think that the committee, under the circumstances, might have departed from its rule and granted a pension to these unfortunate people, who had been deprived of their support by soldiers of the country.

Suffice it to say that it has been described by C. H. Cornell, chairman of the Republican Congressional committee of the Sixth Nebraska district, as a "wanton and cold-blooded murder," committed by soldiers of the Twenty-fifth Infantry with Krag-Jørgensen guns. In commenting a few days ago on the outbreak at Brownsville, Mr. Cornell says of the Niobrara incident:

Although the murdered one was of their own color and without character, the act was no less a crime than the like one which followed it in Brownsville, and only emphasizes the necessity of some form of salutary punishment. While the soldiers might justify silence in the latter case on account of fear lest a fair trial could not be had in Texas, no such excuse could prevail here, since the murdered one was not a citizen of this community, but a woman of their own race in whom no one would have any special interest, and the trial could have been purely on its merits without prejudice against the prisoners. Yet those who possessed the necessary information were as silent in the former as in the latter instance.

I want to assure Mr. Cornell that there was no more need for the conspiracy of silence at Brownsville, Tex., than at Valentine, Nebr. He should not forget that Sergeant Kipper, who murdered an officer of the city of El Paso, had a fair trial and was convicted on the testimony of his fellow-criminals.

For a few minutes, Mr. Chairman, I will leave the history of the Twenty-fifth Infantry—that regiment which so richly deserves the title of "Bloody Twenty-fifth"—and ask your attention to the conduct of other colored organizations in the Army.

AT SUGGS, WYO.

In June, 1892, Suggs, Wyo., was the scene of disorders, and some of the men of the Ninth Cavalry (colored) were the evil-doers. Maj. C. S. Ilsley, of the Ninth Cavalry, said that the trouble was due to quarrels about lewd women, but he says there was a bitter feeling between the citizens of Suggs and the troopers on account of the color of the soldiers.

Twenty of the troopers, armed with carbines and revolvers, raided the town and fired "volley after volley," according to Major Guilfoyle, into the houses of the citizens. Major Guilfoyle says, in his report to the camp adjutant, that "the feeling against the troops has been and is very bitter, being perhaps intensified by race prejudice." The soldiers acted in military concert in this as in other cases.

AT HUNTSVILLE, ALA.

The members of the Tenth Cavalry (colored), at Huntsville, Ala., in October, 1898, made an attack on the provost guard in an effort to release one of their comrades who was under arrest for the use of vile and abusive language. Maj. E. D. Thomas said of it:

This unprovoked assault and mutinous interference with the provost guard caused the shedding of innocent blood, bad feeling between organizations, and endangered the lives of peaceable citizens, terrorized the

community in the vicinity of the railroad depot, and scandalized and disgraced the military service, which calls for the severest condemnation.

He also said :

It is impossible for me to give the names of the ringleaders. This could not be ascertained by any known means. The people connected with the colored organization throughout this investigation have studiously avoided stating or giving names of principal instigators of the riot, in my opinion trying to shield the organization from censure and endeavoring to shift the responsibility and blame for this disgraceful affray on other and innocent parties.

Here it will be observed, Mr. Chairman, as elsewhere, there was a conspiracy of silence on the part of the black troops.

THE AFFAIR AT FORT CONCHO.

In 1881 men from the Sixteenth Infantry and Tenth Cavalry, stationed at Fort Concho, in Texas, numbering about 150, raided and "shot up" the town of San Angelo, a mile or two distant. General Grierson, who commanded at the post, said that he had reason to believe that three noncommissioned officers and two privates were the leading spirits.

This again helps to destroy faith in the suggestion that the noncommissioned officers of these negro regiments can be relied on to keep their men in order and restrain them from the perpetration of crime. Residents of the city of San Angelo have lately written me that hundreds of shots were fired into buildings occupied by citizens of both sexes and all ages. Fortunately only one person was wounded. These negro soldiers arrested the sheriff of the county and demanded that a prisoner held by him on the charge of murder be turned over to them, manifestly with the idea of lynching him.

They defied and held in contempt the civil authorities.

AT SAN ANTONIO.

On the 9th of April, 1867, as the records of the War Department will show, Company E, of the Ninth United States Cavalry, colored, while stationed at San Antonio, Tex., was guilty of mutiny. The first sergeant at the head of his company attacked and killed Lieutenant Griffin and seriously wounded Lieutenants Heyl and Smith.

KEY WEST INCIDENT.

However, the Twenty-fifth Infantry has been conspicuous, even among the negro troops, for its persistent career of crime and mutiny. In 1898, while on the way to Cuba, the regiment was delayed a few days in Key West. What they did there to maintain their record of insurrection and contempt for law is told in the following language by the sheriff of Monroe County. Please observe that the statement is sworn to. I have a letter from an attorney of Key West, who was then police judge, which confirms the statement of the sheriff and which also says that a drunken soldier, whom he was arresting, fired his pistol at the officer.

STATE OF FLORIDA, *Monroe County*:

Before the undersigned authority personally appeared Frank W. Knight, who, being duly sworn, says: That I was sheriff of Monroe County, Fla., in May, 1898, and that the Twenty-fifth United States Infantry (colored) was at that time in the city of Key West awaiting orders for Cuba. That on the 20th day of April, anno Domini 1898, at about 10 p. m. of the same day, one Henry A. Williams (colored) and one of the men belonging to the Twenty-fifth United States Infantry was brought to jail by the city police, charged with an assault with intent to kill; that at about 1 a. m. next morning at least thirty or forty of the soldiers belonging to said Twenty-fifth United States In-

fantry, armed with their guns, came to the jail and surrounded the jail, and came to the door of said jail and demanded the said Williams, saying that if he was not delivered to them they would break the jail down. I being overpowered and no arms to defend myself and the rest of the prisoners in jail and fearing trouble might come to all in jail, thought it best to deliver said prisoner to them, intending to report the matter to the commanding officer at the barracks the next morning. Deponent further says that another reason why he delivered the prisoner over to them was because he had other prisoners in jail charged with murder, and he feared that if he did not turn over this man they would carry their threats into execution, and he would then lose those who he had confined for murder. That the conduct of these men was boisterous, and they were crying out all the time that if I did not turn this man over they would riddle me with bullets and that there would not be a brick left in the building.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this the 27th day of December, A. D. 1906.

F. W. KNIGHT,
Sheriff Monroe County, Fla.

L. W. BETHEL,
Notary Public, State of Florida at Large.
BROWNSVILLE.

And now, Mr. Chairman, I shall say a few words about the latest outbreak of negro soldiers—that of Brownsville on the night of the 13th of August, 1906.

The main facts in this case are too well known to require re-statement. I merely want to comment on some of the pleas put forward for the defense. The theory advanced by some eminent gentlemen about the murder of Frank Natus and the wounding of Policeman Dominguez is so preposterous that citizens of Brownsville, when advised that it would be made, refused to believe it. The Secretary of War well says:

The suggestion that a body of men sharing the hostility of the people of the town should dress themselves in the cast-off clothing of the colored soldiers; should visit the army target range some 15 or 20 miles from the post for the purpose of obtaining used cartridge shells and clips, and then go through the town firing from 100 to 150 shots into houses where women and children were likely to be killed; should actually kill one man and attack the police of the town and nearly kill its lieutenant, and should then sprinkle the cartridge shells and clips on the streets of the town, all merely for the purpose of making a case of murder and riot against the colored troops and of thus securing their removal in the interest of the townspeople whose lives had been thus taken or endangered, is so grotesque in its improbability and absurdity as hardly to call for discussion or comment.

In reply to those gentlemen who say that the soldiers could not have left their barracks, made the raid through the streets of Brownsville, fired into the Miller Hotel and other buildings, killed Frank Natus and wounded Dominguez, and then have returned to the post in the time claimed and without detection, I direct their attention to what men of the same regiment did at Sturgis, in Dakota. In that case they went 1½ miles from Fort Meade to the town of Sturgis, "shot up" the town, and killed one man, and got back to their post without being identified. Thus, it will be observed, they must have traveled approximately 3 miles.

At Brownsville the post is separated from the town by only a stone wall, and the entire raid did not cover over 750 yards. At Fort Meade the commanding officer and his subordinates were advised of the raid as soon as it was undertaken, and General Sturgis, in the language of an eyewitness, "immediately ordered Lieutenant Sickles to take a detachment of his men and go at once and bring them—the raiders—back."

At Brownsville the commanding officer, Major Penrose, knew
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nothing of the raid until it was over, and refused to believe that his men were in it until convinced by evidence of their guilt.

General Sturgis, commanding at Fort Meade, at once ordered Captain Ord to make a check roll call, examine the arms and bring in all that had the appearance of being recently fired. Major Penrose, I believe, did order a roll call, but the arms were not inspected until the next morning, and when inspected were, of course, found to be bright and clean. To pull a small piece of cloth through a gun barrel is the work of a second, and so far as evidence in this case goes the inspection might as well have been delayed a week.

THE MOTIVE.

I fancy very few crimes are committed without the criminal having some reason for his acts—either revenge or gain. In this case it is not difficult to find the causes—at least some of the minor causes. In his telegram of the 20th to the Military Secretary, Major Blocksom mentions what he thinks are the causes. The first he names is racial hostility. Then he mentions the fact that the soldiers were made to drink at separate bars, and personal encounters between soldiers and citizens as other reasons. He might have stopped with the first reason given, for it embraces the second and is the explanation of the others. The soldiers had been advised that the people of Brownsville did not want them there, and they arrived in an ugly mood. I have letters stating that on the way down they asked the conductor of the Brownsville train if there were white women in the town whose favor they might expect. They were insolent in their bearing with citizens and particularly rude toward women.

Fortunately for the citizens of Brownsville, whose politics might be thought by some gentlemen to have caused the trouble, in the only two occasions on which soldiers were personally assaulted the rows were with Federal officeholders who are Republicans.

Fred Tate, inspector of customs, in his report to the collector, says that a negro soldier pushed and elbowed his way through a crowd of ladies, one of whom was Mrs. Tate, and jostled and rubbed against them in a rude manner. This act of deliberate rudeness provoked the anger of Mr. Tate, who did what most men under the circumstances would have done, and what was perfectly proper for him to do, in knocking the soldier down.

Mounted Inspector Baker, another Republican Federal office holder, tried to prevent a quarrel between two drunken soldiers and a ferryman and to stop a torrent of foul abuse pouring out of the mouths of the soldiers, and in doing so, to use his own language, "pushed one of them forward." The soldier was too drunk to keep his balance on the sidewalk and stepped off into a mudhole. Baker adds, "As the negro walked off he said, 'We will see about this to-morrow.'"

Two soldiers did hunt Baker the next day and, as he believes, for the purpose of making a row, but finding him prepared and evidently willing, they became discreet and left without doing any harm.

On the 12th of August, just twenty-four hours before the assault on the town, Mrs. Evans, a highly respectable woman and

wife of a worthy citizen, was seized by the hair and thrown violently to the ground by a soldier in uniform.

These incidents accentuated the feeling of hostility between the soldiers and citizens—a hostility which always and most significantly runs along race lines. They show a state of mind which leads up to and explains the actual assault on the town, and, in my opinion, they clearly show the unwisdom of putting negro soldiers in a station near communities of white people.

It seems too absurd, Mr. Chairman, that at this late day we should be asking who did the shooting. I fail to see how there is room for honest doubt. If the soldiers had been white and the circumstances the same, if the same mass of clear, strong evidence against them had been submitted, and if the President had dismissed them from the service in the same manner, there not only would have been no doubt as to who were the murderers, but the action of the President would have been almost unanimously approved. But, then, the whites are not a valuable political asset handled in bulk, which explains many things.

Does any sane man believe the stupid suggestion that the white citizens of Brownsville, because of their hostility toward black soldiers, fired into their own houses and killed one of their own people, at the same time endangering the lives of their women and children? Such a theory is an insult to the intelligence of the country and seeks to put the people of Brownsville below the beasts of the field. Even the dumb brutes love their young and will protect them. Shots were deliberately fired into a house which only a few minutes before had been the scene of a children's party and which still had a number of occupants. By the merest chance no one was killed, for the shots took effect only $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the floor. Surely sectional and political prejudice has gone the limit in this cruel suggestion.

If it is seriously urged, Mr. Chairman, that the people of Brownsville did this shooting, I most solemnly protest against the reflection on their marksmanship. I do not believe that you could find any community in the United States, even that least accustomed to the use of arms, who could not hit the barracks buildings at Fort Brown, at which the people of this Texas town are said to have fired. I know there is no such community in the State of Texas. Had the people of Brownsville been armed with these rifles and doing the shooting on that awful August night the list of casualties would have been longer and the dead and wounded would not all have come from one side. [Applause.]

A few days ago I read in the Washington Herald a statement made by a retired officer of the British army who, although he spoke guardedly, as becomes a visitor to the country, did not conceal his surprise at the fact that black soldiers are kept in our Army for service in times of peace. He said that Great Britain, even under the stress of war and in the face of repeated disasters, did not employ them against the Boers in South Africa. He assigned as a reason for the British policy the admitted prejudice, mutually entertained, of the races. I mention this, Mr. Chairman, to show that the people of the United States are not peculiar in this respect. I say the people of the United States, instead of the people of the South, because of

comparatively recent events which show that this prejudice does not stop at Mason and Dixon's line. Lynchings are a disgrace, I admit, and they should be made impossible by the enactment of such intelligent laws and by such prompt and rigid enforcement of them that no man's thoughts would ever turn in that direction for the punishment of crime. But they are not peculiar to the South. They are only more frequent there because of multiplied instances of crime of a frightful sort. Even Springfield, Ohio, if the press and that entertaining essayist, Ray Stanard Baker, tell the truth, has on occasions resorted to lynching. And strangely enough the mob spirit was largely directed by race prejudice. The lynching of a negro criminal at Springfield in March, 1904, was followed by a very carnival of crime directed at the black inhabitants of that city. Not only was there evidence of prejudice against the particular criminals, but it seemed to have been directed against the whole negro race. They were hunted out of their homes and their property destroyed by fire. Mr. Baker describes the situation in this way:

The public was apathetic. No one seemed to care; only a nigger had been hanged.

Danville, Ill., was also the scene of a manifestation of race prejudice, which the writer says is growing with the growth of the negro population. It would not be difficult to multiply these illustrations of the fact that the race prejudice which exists in the South, and which we admit, is also to be found in the North, but usually denied. The newspapers give us overwhelming evidence of it every day.

As I have already said, I fear that we have not yet reached the stage where we will legislate on this matter intelligently and for conditions as we find them. But we will reach it by and by.

After a few incidents like those at Fort Meade, San Carlos, El Paso, and Brownsville Congress will be really aroused to a discharge of its duty in this matter. Repeat the Brownsville affair with a change of locus—let it occur in Michigan, New York, or Illinois—and a new light will be seen. Until then we will be as patient as possible, having faith that finally the sympathy of the whole country will be given to that section which has been so tried in the school of disaster, a section which stands face to face with the perplexities and dangers of the most difficult question any people on earth were ever called on to meet and solve. When all the States comprehend this question, which now they barely apprehend, they will help us of the South to make it certain that the homes of white men in a white man's country will be protected by white men only. [Loud applause.]



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